

Jerry Vallely, Bi-State Development  
External Communications Manager or Julie Hauser  
314-982-1458 (o) (314) 486-5553 (c) PR Counsel, St. Louis Regional Freightway  
(314) 629-3887 (c)

Madison Avery, a family consumer science teacher at Pattonville High School, was inspired by what she learned. “Oh my gosh, it was so fun. I did not know that St. Louis was a global logistics hub and I've lived here my whole life. It really opened up my eyes as an individual, which is really, really beneficial for all the access that I have to students looking to get a career,” said Avery. “That is really important to me. Now that I'm educated, I can further educate my students. There are excellent paying jobs straight out of high school and the required training will be given to you.”

Drew McAllister, Program Director for The Spark program through the Parkway School District, was excited to learn that the port operators would be open to having students out to visit their facilities. “I think that would be an amazing student experience to connect with one of the ports here near the river and really see all the pieces that go into making a large section of our economy,” said McAllister.

Brian Crouse, Vice President of Education for the Missouri Chamber, was enthusiastic about the impact the Ag Coast tour could have back in classrooms across the bi-state region. “It was a great experience. They got a chance to hear from industry about where the starting jobs are and where the potential to finish for that job could be,” Crouse said. “We heard from rail anywhere from 70 to one hundred thousand dollars starting out. That's phenomenal. Today's students just don't know about that. Bringing these educators in on FreightWeek is a wonderful partnership between Bi-State Development and the Missouri Chamber. And, hopefully, they go back to their schools and talk about the careers in multimodal for their students, so they can see the opportunities.”

The cruise also was on the agenda for a group of delegates from Córdoba Province in Argentina whose trip to the St. Louis region was organized by The Yield Lab Institute and BioSTL, as part of the Cultivar initiative, to foster greater collaboration between St. Louis and South and Latin American agricultural and food-related companies and organizations. More than 30 people participated in the mission, including senior leaders and entrepreneurs from across Argentina's ag-tech, bioenergy, food processing, and agri-finance sectors. The delegates learned about operations in the Ag Coast and the efficiencies it delivers.

“It's great to see all these [grain] elevators and operations move such a huge number of grains over the river and how they maintain the river depth to keep the grains flowing. The farmers have a low cost,” said Manuel Ron, President of an innovation agency in Córdoba Province. “Being efficient in these freight operations is very important to have a good cost for commodities. We have similar operations in Argentina, so we have lot to learn here about this.” Ron said he sees potential for startups in Argentina to be part of the St. Louis ecosystem and vice versa.

The Ag Coast Cruise is a signature event of FreightWeekSTL, which was hosted June 2 – 6 by the St. Louis Regional Freightway. Mary Lamie, head of the St. Louis Regional Freightway, provided guests on board with background on why the St. Louis region is branded as the Ag Coast of America. She highlighted how the 16 barge-transfer facilities concentrated in a 15-mile stretch of the Mississippi River anchored by the Gateway Arch can handle more than 150 barges a day – the highest level of capacity anywhere along the Mississippi River. She also called attention to the St. Louis region's port system's ranking as the most efficient inland port system in the nation.

“The punch line on this is we are a global logistics hub,” Lamie said. “We have a tremendous number of jobs in the transportation industry. With today's program, we believe this is a really great opportunity to better connect classroom knowledge with business and industry applications.” Lamie also is Executive Vice President of Multimodal Enterprises for Bi-State Development, which operates the Gateway Arch Riverboats.

For information on the Gateway Arch Riverboat's regular sightseeing riverboat cruises and other specialty cruises and entertainment available, visit [www.gatewayarch.com/riverboats](http://www.gatewayarch.com/riverboats). To learn more about FreightWeekSTL 2025 or view any of the video sessions from June 2 - 6, visit [www.freightweekstl.com](http://www.freightweekstl.com).

**About St. Louis Regional Freightway**

*A Bi-State Development enterprise, the St. Louis Regional Freightway is a regional freight district and comprehensive authority for freight operations and opportunities within eight counties in southwestern Illinois and eastern Missouri, which comprise the St. Louis metropolitan area. Public sector and private industry businesses are partnering with the St. Louis Regional Freightway to establish the bi-state region as one of the premier multimodal freight hubs and distribution centers in the United States through marketing and advocacy for infrastructure development that supports the movement of freight. To learn more, visit [thefreightway.com](http://thefreightway.com).*